

FERENC GLATZ

Scientific and Technological Revolution and the Small Nations

Challenges of Our Age and the East-Central European Intellectuals

Organization of Production

By now it has become quite clear: it was the *recent scientific and technological revolution* which led to the collapse of the Soviet system both as a military-strategic unit and as a social system. Also, as a formation unable to adjust itself to what is new.

Following this collapse, the chip, microelectronics, the communication and information systems, as well as the succession of newer generations of computers can already freely influence the shaping of societies in the East-Central European region, too. These new developments eroded the old organization of production, along with the organization of work based on the former. They also undermined the communications and community culture stretching between the individual and the community, as well as the regional and administrative structure of the community. To say nothing of the fact that they can democratize the region's political organization at a more rapid rate than any other local political power could over the past century and a half. They can make public events part of the citizen's daily life practically overnight. Thus now, to express any opinion about public affairs is an opportunity offered to – if not a social responsibility to be taken by – every citizen. Even if some citizens will not take this opportunity.

Not only did the forces of the new industrial-technological revolution overcome the whole Soviet system, but after the collapse, they also sped up the integration of this region into the western world and the labour market, a process which had been trailing on for centuries. *The world order which took shape in the first half of the 19th century is now in the process of disintegration.* This disintegration and the development of new forms are factors underlying all what is now going on in the region.

Looking back, we can see that the industrial and technological revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries turned the last period of the Iron Age into a wonderful machine-epoch. The machine – first the steam-, then the combustion-, and finally the electrical engines – changed not only the working processes, the culture of the working tools, and not only sped up the ages-old pace of the movement-system of human beings, but it also required a new-type production

organizational framework for the community-scale production. After thousands of years, it created a free labour market. It gradually changed the factors governing the everyday life of people: free movement from place to place, frameworks for settlement and dwelling. The machine brought new forms in local administration, in the behavioural patterns and norms and in the rhythm of life.

However, looking forward, the production and labour organization of today undergoes changes which compare in magnitude with all changes in the previous centuries. By means of informatics, the globalization tendencies have become more intensive both in the organization and control of production, in trade and in the communication system and movement of the individual. The scope of the individual's movement and interest has extended beyond almost all bounds. *The new techniques of production organization destroy the shaky fence of national economies.* The working places of craftsmen, farmers, intellectuals – even in the smallest village – have equally become part of the world market. Their working abilities, their efficiency as well as their products are measured by the standards of the world market. And we must remember: *this is for the first time that the society has to face information as a new factor of power.* This is the new means of power next to the military, monetary and bureaucratic means. Information and knowledge are capable of creating an order of values, and form the preconditions of human prosperity and individual success. It is an assumption rather than certitude that the ability of knowledge to create a value-order will also increase the power of the institutions of knowledge, and will supposedly give rise to new social hierarchies, or at least will rearrange the old ones. The technical-technological, cultural and political components of the epoch-making changes throughout the western world have been present for several decades in the everyday life of the bourgeois societies. These new “world forces” have only recently and suddenly “dashed” at our region. It should be admitted that they caught us unprepared.

Informatics and Administration

The on-going industrial-technological revolution also demands for and facilitates radical changes in the *techniques of community-organization*. It severely questions, above all, *the viability of the so far existing systems of territorial administration*. In the age of informatics – when thinking has to be adjusted to the new techniques provided by the mobile telephones and the electronic press, etc. – the concept of “distance” will convey a different meaning. The territorial scope of administration as “the management of public affairs” could extend considerably. And it could become more effective. *It could break up the old organizations of territorial administration*, unless the interest representing organizations of the old bureaucracy are strong enough to resist rationalization and to abstain from learning the new techniques which require more intellectual efforts.

This poses the question of which units of the 19th century organization of territorial administration can be regarded as ones of lasting value? Seemingly, the *communities*, i.e. the local habitations are lasting units. But there arise some other questions too: whether the other patterns of territorial organization of the last century are viable today? – what future holds for the *states as major units of territorial administration*? – whether or not the country borders as drawn up on the map of the Iron Age Europe will change? – whether *the present function and powers of the states* will remain unchanged? The 19th century industrial revolutions made the vernacular the basis of territorial administration as a necessary condition of local administration and plant management. This led to the birth of the national states of the continent. The national state was the foundation, on which the respective economic, commercial, security and defence administrations were built. The new principles of production organization will not tolerate the region's total dividing into separate national states. The extension of the individual's radius of movement as well as that of information exchange, are expected to terminate this strict division. The 19th century form of the state will be forced to relegate some of its powers to major integrative units: mainly the economic-administrative and defence-related strategic powers. This enables the state to relegate further powers to minor regional (within the country) and local (communal), autonomous units of community organization and perhaps to ones formed on a professional or inter-trade basis. What remains to be seen is the extent to which the continental integration will weaken the citizens and the national state that puts limits on production, and to which it will strengthen the new regional organizations independent of the state. The related standpoints of the European Union seem to prefer the regional institutions and initiatives. The fundamental principle of financing – mission- and project-financing – also rests upon the same consideration. These are all efforts to reduce the preponderating power of administration in the national states.

Increasing the crisis of the system of territorial administration in Central Europe is the fact that the borders of the organizations of territorial administration (i.e. the official state-borders) have never coincided with those of the (historical) national (ethnic) dwellings of the region's nations. What is the future? New micro-national states as Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia? Or? Can these states serve as a basis for a new-type federation of the East-Central European countries? A formation we have been speaking of for decades without any response? That is nothing else but a forty-year old constrained integration that cannot be popular among our contemporaries if only because of the memory of the CMEA (Council of Mutual Economic Aid, also known as COMECON). Or is it possible to create a new-type pluralist integration in European and in East-Central European dimensions, respectively? Such a formation would retain the sovereignty of the state and the unity of the territorial state administration which is to serve the public security as well as the local and national cultures.

At the same time, integration in the fields of economy and production would serve different – regional and intercontinental – interests. Another question is whether – simultaneously with all this – integration in defence and security would necessarily take intercontinental organizational forms? These integrations are at different levels and of different intensity, depending on what is required by the given special branch, namely the publicly financed administration, security, culture and production financed either privately or in a mixed form.

It has already been recognized: the region's fragmentation into small, autarchic national states, which are often in conflict with each other, impedes the improvement of the international competitiveness of societies existing in this region. The many different customs-systems, different legislations, especially in labour law, all hinder the improvement of material conditions and hence the economic growth: the free flow of capital, culture of labour and expertise. They also hinder the human and cultural progress as well as and the attainment of the individual endeavours. In other words, all this blocks the driving force of modernization. But is there a political will which could unanimously formulate all this in a form understandable to the entire society? And where is the political will which could *implement all what results from the related conclusions*? Our industrialized world has taught us the lesson: if there is not a well-constructed gear, the motor – the intellectuals and the political sphere – may run, the wheels and the vehicle itself – the work organization of the society – will remain unmoved.

Communications Culture: Lingua Franca and the Vernacular

The strengthening economic and administrative integrations and the extension of the individual's scope of movement and information confront the minor vernacular cultures with the dilemma of "to be or not to be". The techniques of human communication have been laid upon new foundations. Namely, what else is the language if not the basic means of the communication system? It is on this account that language can be the primary keeper of the most ancient strata of culture and of the system of social relations (i.e. of tradition). Thus it is subject to continuous renewal, depending, of course, on the production and communications culture of the society using the given language. As is widely-known, it is a centuries-old desire to find and accept a common *lingua franca* or at least a few such *linguae*. *Lingua franca* today is an imperative need rather than a desire. It is made imperative by the information exchange, at both continental and global levels, and by the development of the global system of production and administration.

The individual mother tongues had become the instruments for organizing the communities within the national states in the 19th century. This equally holds true for vernaculars used by a larger or smaller number of members of the

society. Now, in the decades of the development of informatics, all local means of communication and the local cultures of communication seem to become depreciated. This depreciation may also be increased by the consequence of the transition to market economy. Behind the big linguistic cultures which make claim to the rank of *lingua franca*, there is, of course, the private capital: the techniques conveying the major languages – motion picture, books, periodicals, and, above all, the electronic information carriers – all promise new fields of investment. At the same time, minor vernacular cultures are not backed up by the strong international private capital that advance the enrichment of the great linguistic cultures. Conveying minor linguistic cultures, the smaller companies in the cultural industries of small nations are not competitive in the world market.

However cruel as it may seem, one must raise the question of *whether it is necessary to sustain the small languages* in the age of integration? In this context, some years ago we have already raised the following question: *whose is that integrated Europe which we wish to build?* Is it only the continent of the great linguistic – English, French, German, Spanish – cultures? What is going to happen to the vernaculars of the less populous societies, thus to the Hungarian, Romanian, Czech or Slovak languages? Whether Europe will be divided once more – as in the Middle Ages – into a narrow stratum of the elite – which then spoke, more or less correctly, the Latin language as the *lingua franca* of that age –, and into a stratum pressed at a lower cultural and social level, which knows only the vernacular, the local means of communication?

Competitiveness of the Manpower

But all this concerns not only and simply the uncertainties about the future of intellectual culture. It also affects the organization of production. By way of example, I personally doubt that the production culture of the 21st century – including informatics, space technology, nuclear power plants and the increasingly sophisticated personal tools, etc. – would tolerate a *manpower* structured by the norms of the Iron Age. Meaning by this a manpower structure comprising the groups of highly skilled workers and those of semi- or unskilled workers who only hardly understood the operation of more complex machines, workmen with simple hammers and hand-barrows, whom the Machine Age could still fairly well employ. Thus, how can we regard the general cultural level and special skills of this old-type manpower, which still accounts for the greater part of our present-day society, as qualifications sufficient to meet the requirements the recent scientific and technological revolution?

Looking back, we can see that a century and a half ago, this problem still could be solved by the compulsory primary education provided by the state and by the secondary education. This school system with its very coherent and

well-established requirements could ensure a proper cultural and linguistic environment, conveying also adequate knowledge in such fields as the earth and life sciences, mathematics, history etc. – and all this in the vernacular.

But looking ahead we are sure that the local society will still speak and write in the vernacular in the foreseeable future. If the vernacular will not be properly updated so that it might follow the international developments, a significant part of the manpower will drop out of the mainstream of world development. Thus those conveying the minor local cultures, i.e. the Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and other citizens of the next century, will not be *competitive* as employees in the world market. The problem we have to face is this: shall we be able to update our mother-tongue and to adjust it to the requirements of the new technological, and with this, the globally open human culture? The question of the *language-based oral and written communication* – we never tire of repeating this – is not only that of the so-called national feeling or of the respect of traditions. The culture of linguistic (oral and written) communication is the *most important fundamental problem of the future Hungarian society, affecting serious social-material and technological issues, including production.*

Challenges and the “East”

In the western societies the new world tendencies only gradually transformed the everyday life of the society. This is what social scientists prefer to term as “organic development”. Indeed, year by year, almost unnoticed, subsequent generations were adjusting themselves, their customs and life programs to the new technology, to the new economic order as well as to the resulting new demands raised on production, and to the emerging new global way of thinking. To all this did they adjust their means of communication, even if their efforts to learn and adopt these foreign language cultures were impeded by the inevitable arrogance of those speaking the world languages. But, undoubtedly, they have modernised their mother tongue. At the eastern ends of the West, however, the contemporary generations were caught unprepared by the change of the epoch. This change produced *shocking*, nerve-racking effects on the generations grown up under the Soviet rule, often making them quite perplexed. (Since I am a historian by profession, I cannot help remarking in parentheses that the shocking effects of encountering the world tendencies resulted not only from the decades of isolation or self-imposed seclusion characteristic of the Soviet system, but they also have much to do with the centuries-old difference between the eastern and western half of the Continent.)

We are speaking of years decisive of the region’s fate. Looking back we find that it was in the early 19th century “*Reform Era*” for the last time that Hungary experienced a change of the nation’s fortune comparing with the present situation. It was then that the intellectual elite had to face a change of epoch in the

19th century Europe, entailing the industrial and technological revolution and the new social order, along with the communal values of the emerging bourgeois society. The Hungarian statesmen of the Reform Era were all open-minded and highly dynamic personalities. *They recognized the imperatives of the age, and they shaped their days accordingly.* They carried through the abolition of serfdom, providing by this a free labour market, they enacted new legislations to govern the new enterprises and to encourage the entrepreneurial endeavours. It was they who infused the bourgeois virtues in the society of the “Hungarian Fallow” – to use Széchenyi’s terms. The contemporary Hungarian elite created the up-to-date system of territorial administration in the Carpathian Basin, which provided an institutional system to such things as pursuing industrial activities, public security, the up-to-date administration of justice, and also to politics as the modern art of community organization. Taken all this together, these elite created the modern Hungarian bourgeois state. It also promoted the leading of a modern life based on the mentioned bourgeois values. The highly complex systems of plants organization and management, marketing, personal contacts, settlements and administration all necessitated the development and modernisation of the mother tongues as the main means of communication. This demand was recognized by the intellectuals – writers, clergymen, economists, engineers, publicists – who developed a modern and finely chiselled vernacular by the middle of the 19th century, utilizing the results of efforts the neologists had made during the previous decades. Thus was it that the Hungarian language was born basically in the same form as it is spoken today. With this linguistic aid, the local population could already successfully meet the challenges of the age.

The transformation of the socio-cultural environment was a long-lasting process taking a century and a half. This process was accompanied by a series of political and armed conflicts. Members of a whole generation undertook to do this pioneering work and even to be consumed, if necessary, by their struggle against the uncomprehending attitude of many towards their efforts. Deserving special mention in this context are such personalities as I. Széchenyi, M. Wesselényi, J. Eötvös, . Trefort, L. Szalay and L. Kossuth as well as dozens of other statesmen. This was *a narrow but highly committed and effective elite*. Personalities, who could perceive the challenges of the age and were capable of executing – according to contemporary international standards – the country’s modernisation, and of creating the fundamental institutional system of embourgeoisement.

Alternatives and the Questions of the Future

But let us take a look ahead! The contemporary elite – like its forerunner in the Reform Era – has to meet the challenges of the *global development*. Notably, to

find the proper place of the population living in this region – as a community of both citizens and nationals – in the world *system of production* which is now in the process of a new-type organization. To find a *political system* (to settle the problem of the relationship among organizations representative of political and social interests, political parties and the legislative and executive branches of power) adequate to the internal life of the community. To create an institutional framework for the *territorial administration* so that it could meet the new demands. Within this, due attention must be paid to the historical endowments, namely that the borders of the respective ethnic settlements have never coincided with the administrative state-borders in the Carpathian Basin. Another requirement is an adjustment to the new need of human communication, i.e. to those of the information society. Recognition and creation. This is our task.

Attention should also be given to the fact that the future railways-, motorways- and air-routes are now plotted or re-drawn on the map of the continent. We must be present with all our imagination and invention in order that the interests of both the citizens and the whole national community might be asserted. We must attain that these routes be adjusted not only to the *economic and strategic interests* of the major states as great powers. As is widely known, the nations, the territory of which is joined in the *international network of transport and communication*, will supposedly enjoy an unprecedentedly great upswing both in material conditions and in general civilization. It should also be taken into account that the *presence of expertise* has already yielded immense profit. As a result of the informatics revolution and the termination of the ideology-based division of the world, not only the free flow of the capital grew to global dimensions, but *research and development (R&D) also became an international endeavour*. Investors and manufacturers will locate their R&D bases to places where they could find the most advantageous legislative, public security and scientific environment. The question is whether Hungary could push the advantages of the presence of a “grey matter” which is highly competitive in Central European comparison? What can the strategy of the *Hungarian agricultural sector* be like in the 21st century? The problem of the agricultural sector is not simply that of food production, it is also a key-issue of the possibility of sustaining the Hungarian landscape, the cropland, the vegetation and livestock, as well as the whole environment. The related question is: how can the manifold interests of the rural areas and generally of the local society be articulated? How can the conflicts between the country and the capital city, between the town and the village – contradictions which have haunted us ever since the Trianon Peace Treaty – be resolved? By what kind of settlement and community policies?

The negotiations on our *EU accession* are now drawing near. The interests of local societies and also those of the society of small nations – of Hungary in this particular case – should also be articulated. And efforts should be made to enforce these interests and to bring them into harmony with the interests of the

other countries of the continent, with special regard to those of our neighbouring countries. Otherwise, we would get once more into an integration, in which we do not feel comfortably. There are some further questions. What advantage and what disadvantage can we derive from the EU? Which are the negative implications, avoidable and unavoidable, of our adjustment to the EU requirements? How can we preserve the *transcontinental interests* of a small state and nation under the conditions of belonging to a West-European community which presently seems to be a rather closed one? Or to put it in a simpler way: what does it cost if we happen to be left out of the European integration? And how will the *conditions of the Hungarian national survival*, both within the country and in the Hungarian-inhabited neighbouring countries, be changed? All this must be ascertained. Further questions. Do we know the image the world has formed of us? Of the organization, values of our traditions, as well as of our manpower and intellectual capital. *Our image in the external world* may have a serious effect not only on the flow of capital into the country, but it also may determine our general feelings when we are to live together with other peoples in an integrated world. To be examined are those *social effects* which may determine the fate of generations as a result of such factors as the collapse of the Soviet system, the world-wide integration of production, the market economy and privatisation. Appearing as a deficit of the former. All this may shake the confidence of generations or even of whole social strata in market economy and in the use and value of the democratism of society. Also to be studied are the improvements and deteriorations in the quality of life which have taken place over the past years. And so forth.

History always offers alternatives to the individual and to the community alike. To recognize the alternatives and to formulate the related questions clearly are of vital importance at both the individual and the community level. This prevents us from helplessly swimming with the tide. But history also offers decision-making choices. Thus one can make good and wrong decisions. *The decisions made by the present leaders of the Hungarian society may determine the fate of the whole community for a century.* This raises the question of which groups of the Hungarian social elite is responsible for exploring the possible alternatives of the future and for formulating relevant questions as to the present and the future? My answer is this: all this is the responsibility of the region's intellectuals in the first place.

Tasks of the Elite

The *political elite* can hardly assume such a role. The energy of this group is absorbed by the running of the multi-party system, the legislation, and of the executive power. Accordingly, its professional training and education is also adjusted to the political field: to legislation which – in the years of the transition understandably enough – involves immense tasks. This group – understandably

again – concentrated on party politics. So much the more, as policy-making as a reason for its existence is owing to party tickets. But the time of these elite are also absorbed by the actual representation of the constituency which – being a novel work in the transition period – is also an energy-consuming occupation. To say nothing of the politicians belonging to the incumbent ruling party who are supposed to take certain government offices as well.

But it is easy to understand anyway that the analysis of highly complex factors, which may determine the fate of continents, state systems and national cultures for several decades, cannot be adjusted to the political interests of parties or simply to party politics. Nor can it be adjusted to political campaigns associated with the elections held every four years. This has also been repeatedly explained to our western colleagues over the past few years. But they only wave their hand sadly. Yet the political administration necessarily adjusts its rhythm of life and standpoints to such considerations. We can only hope – both in the East and in the West – that someday *the political elite*, hidden in the party bureaucracies, *will group its parliamentary and daily political debates around those decisive issues which determine the community life in the long run*. Hopefully, they will do so instead of confronting the minor group interests, and of personal rivalries.

The rest of the elite form the so-called *economic and scientific-intellectual elite*. Let us glance back again upon the mid-19th century elite. The strategic questions concerning the state and the nation were then raised by the members of a group composed of independent, wealthy intellectuals, part of whom had also a landed-property. In executing the resulting programs, they cooperated with all active members of the Parliament, and pressed, urged these politicians to follow and represent their large-scale reform conceptions which were deemed as necessary by all. In fact, an effective cooperation was developed between the incumbent government and the intellectual elite; in this context reference should be made to our 19th century civil engineers, reformers in the medical field, and to I. Széchenyi himself. Even later, in the periods following the historical events of 1848/49 and 1867, this elite did not refrain from taking part in the government coalition. Belonging among them were not only such personalities who later became zealous party politicians as L. Kossuth or F. Deák, but also scholars like J. Eötvös, Á. Trefort, M. Horváth and I. Széchenyi himself who always considered the European aspects rather than the political line of one or another party. The most remarkable characteristic of this small elite group was that they always remained – to use the concepts of that age – *intellectual personalities* (famed writers, scholars).

A New Division of Labour between Politics and the Intellectuals

But let us look forward again! It is, then, quite natural if – at the time of an epochal change comparing with the Reform Age – the economic and scientific

elite is expected to call the attention of the society to the effects of the new developments emerging throughout the world. It is also expected to undertake the consequences of the position it has taken in matters decisive of the future for centuries to come. And also to encourage the political elite to serve the modernisation and to subject its own group interests and that of its respective parties to the interests of the whole community.

Thus what is needed is a new-type division of labour between the *scientific and the political elite*. This undoubtedly calls for new-type attitudes to be shown by both the scientists and the politicians.

What type of attitude is expected of the politician?

In this region the first phase of the transition period – at least in our opinion – has come to an end. Not only in Hungary, but now – in consideration of changes following from the recent elections in Romania – in the whole region. In this first phase, the demolition of the proletarian dictatorship has become irreversible. It has become clear that the ideology-based isolation of national states is superseded by a social order open to the world. The democratic institutional system, and within this, the multi-party system, have irreversibly won over the monolithic one-party system and its dictatorial institutions. Market economy has replaced the plan-controlled system of economy; the ideology-based social hierarchy has been superseded by the assertion of human rights. Though there were hot debates over the ways of realization and over the local points of main effort, but all this was going on in a peaceful manner by the normal means of political democracy. At the time of the speed-up of the transition process, between 1989 and 1996, the struggles for positions – naturally – increased, and a sort of “changing of the guard” would be a more characteristic term for this period. It also goes without saying that those years called for politicians well-trained in hand-to-hand, or even in jungle fight.

Now, however, *quite different virtues are required from the politicians*. Politicians are needed who are in possession of the knowledge and ability to look upon the above-mentioned *factors of strategic purport*, which affect the region’s nations and states, from a continental or intercontinental perspective. And who will really do their best that the daily debates, both within the parties and in the Parliament, be centred on the mentioned thematic groups. And *who are able and ready to conclude a new-type agreement with the intellectuals*, i.e., with a highly qualified social group which is well-trained in strategic thinking. This is a necessary *condition of the political consolidation*. It is only our preliminary opinion – which cannot be expounded here for lack of space – that *consolidation will form the next period in the region’s contemporary history*. If this did not take place, the region would not be able to find a proper response to the economic, technological and intellectual challenges of the age and to those of the world market.

The New-Type Attitude to be Shown by Scientists

The new division of labour also requires a new attitude to be shown by the scientific community. *An active, scholarly attitude towards public life and the society.* I repeatedly emphasize that I do not make this statement out of some ethical considerations or of some ideological imperatives, or of the Greek-Roman-Jewish-Christian ethical traditions. This is stated on account of mere practical considerations. Namely, without activating the science and the scientific elite, we are not able to release the real potentials hidden in the Central European societies and to find our place in the new world order.

However, as is widely known, the “grey matter” tends to abstain from an open discussion on the forces decisive of the continent and the whole world. But why? – we used to ask our western colleagues in these years. Why is it that the social activity, which was still markedly present in the early years of the century, has completely disappeared from the life of the intellectual elite? My answer is this: the reason lies in the fact that *the “large-scale” politics has aggressively settled down on the society.* (I must add to this in parentheses that this statement is, of course, a necessary simplification of the problem with regard to the size of a lecture, and is also necessarily seen from the aspect of the academic circles.) These highly qualified intellectual elite rightly keeps clear of the social struggles and the related problems – as we used to explain to our politician-friends – since in West-Europe the field of social activity has become a theatre of daily, mainly party-policy struggles, and social life has almost turned into a “large scale factory” of party politics. In response to these developments of the past fifty years, the intellectual elite retired to the autonomous universities and research institutes. It either tends to underrate the political elite because of its turning into party-policy elite, or simply fears it.

In our region, the relationship between *the scientific-intellectual elite and the political elite* changed in a more variegated manner. Over the past 45 years, the intellectual stratum in general and the intellectual elite in particular have shown a basically proper attitude – especially in Poland and Hungary. (Again in parentheses: an exact and deep evaluation naturally forms the task of historians.) True, in the period of the dictatorship and then in that of the consolidation of the Soviet system, this intellectual elite made its own compromise with the system. In the first years, it yielded to the political requirements and directives of the dictatorship to the detriment of the scientific and professional interests both in the system of scientific qualification and in selecting the research topics. At the same time it pushed the advantages of its relatively privileged position which the system offered in exchange for the use of the scientific achievements and for the “peaceful” behaviour of the scientific community. With these compromises though, during the period of the Soviet system, the major part of the elite could run well the infrastructures of technology, communications and economy, could

sustain, fairly well for those circumstances, the industrial and mainly the agricultural production of the country as well as the schools and the scientific establishments.

It has also been recognized by now that in the period of the speed-up of the country's transition process, i.e. after 1989, the intellectual elite unambiguously performed well. It participated in the actual political debates, in government administration, even if it did not display high administrative virtues. Some members of these elite even sacrificed their scientific career. It was the matter of personal inclination, decision and living conditions. Then – closely experiencing the hectic life of party organizations and recognizing that political activity will not require that kind of culture and expertise which they have – these intellectual withdrew again from the political field.

But what is to be done now? Keeping an eye on the world-wide changes, and seeing how easily may certain possibilities get lost – because they passed unnoticed and so no attempt was made to realize them –, our answer may only be this: *our "grey matter" must be mobilized.*

Science – Public Life – Politics

As history has shown, the mobilization of the "grey matter" is subject to certain conditions. The primary condition is to create a social environment which ensures the scientist an independence enabling him to assume a social role. It should be established once more: *the cultivation of science is a meaningful activity only if the autonomy and self-regulation of scientific activity are ensured.* This statement is again prompted by merely practical considerations rather than by some social theory or by an ideology. The society may only benefit from science – either in production, or in the cultivation of general culture – if it recognizes the *autonomy* and self-regulation of the cultivation of science and has them recognized by the political institutions as well. Any preconception – which comes from fields outside the science – concerning the expected scientific conclusions may only distort the results and makes their applicability questionable. At the same time we should admit that here the *autonomy and self-regulation of scientific activities is not to mean that science is an end in itself.* It is admitted that our objective is also to serve the community. But we do it by means different from the political ones. It has been often declared that it is beneficial to science if the scientific results are built in the general culture, in education and in the production process. This benefit consists in our possibility to maintain the background institution of culture and production: the big "factory" of scientific knowledge. Another benefit is that by this the "science industry" can be present in the society. To be added to all this is still another benefit, namely that the scientists as citizens experiencing the events of our present days may take a part in *investi-*

gating the challenges offered to the whole community. And so, we can assume a public role arising from our being community members.

What does this public role mean?

It can be established that the new-type division of labour requires the clarification and general acceptance of the related concepts. It is to be emphasized that there is a difference between *politics* and *participation in the public life*. Participation in the public life means to assume a role in exploring the driving forces which have an impact on the society as a whole. To show the possible alternatives. As has been mentioned, this marvellous, two thousand-year old tradition of the European civil society was buried only by our century when the public life was identified with one of its one-time parts, i.e. with party politics. What is needed today is to renew the European public life, taken in its classical sense. This renewal also includes the creation of new-type forums. The means of modern mass-communication and of the information society also offer a real opportunity to those forces which stand outside the party politics. An opportunity to influence the contemporary citizen's way of thinking. They offer effective forums. The radio, television and the newspapers accompany the citizen in each hour of the day to every scene of the daily life. They offer the intellectual elite and its institutions the possibility of building up a new-type civil society. (Provided – I note in parentheses – these forums are concerned with really public issues instead of the internal organizational problems and rivalries of scientific guilds.) The scientific elite is not supposed to participate in political party struggles. These elite should not offer the arms of high scientific qualifications to be used in the political skirmishes, but it should develop its own institutions within the civil society and to undertake meaningful roles in this reconsidered and revived public life.